

Vesalius College

Course description

Course title: Origins of Art

Course code: ART 108E

Teacher responsible: Dr. Bruno Overlaet, (adj. ass. prof.)

Course description:

The course offers the undergraduate students a comprehensive survey of history of art, of the artistic creative forces within various cultures and of socio-economic implications of modern art museum politics.

The course starts with an orientation in the technical aspects of artistic production processes (bronze casting techniques, pottery techniques). This is followed by a discussion on Museums and art collecting. This includes an historical survey of the Museum concept and the evolution in international legislation on national heritage and art trade (Unesco). Case studies are used to illustrate the changing international attitudes and existing political differences (repatriation of art / the ongoing Greek-British conflict on the Parthenon sculptures).

The third part of the course is a survey of the artistic production of various cultures with specific case-studies in Europe (Greece, Rome), the Near East (Assyrians, Achaemenians, Sasanians), Central Asia (Scythians), Africa (Benin) and America (early North American cultures, Maya, Inca).

Course objectives:

The course aims at introducing the student to history of art and its implications in modern society in its widest sense. As such it is not only of interest to students interested in archaeology or art, but also to those who will be confronted with museum or artistic management. At the end of the course, the students should:

- have an understanding of certain artistic creative processes;
- have a general knowledge of various cultures;
- appreciate the complexity and understand the importance of “national heritage” and its implications on political and economic decision making;
- have developed an understanding of the impact on the artistic production of a diversity of aspects, including economy, politics and climate change.
- be aware of the changing present day perceptions of cultural property, politics and museum management.

Grade weighting scheme:

2 research papers	20 + 20 %
Research paper presentation	20 %
Mid-term exam	20 %
Final exam	20 %

A = 85%, A- = 81%, B+ = 77%, B = 73%, B- = 69%, C+ = 66%, C = 62%, C- = 58%, D+ = 54%, D = 50%, F = below 50%.

Used course material (handbooks, readers, readings, newspapers, magazines) and references:

Powerpoint presentations

Video documentaries

Hand-outs

Reading assignments (web sites)

Press releases on art trade, museum management and art repatriation cases